

VORTICELLA POLYPINA.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Corpus contractile nudum, ciliis rotatoriis.

Lin. Syst. Nat. Gmel. p. 3874.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

VORTICELLA composita ovato-truncata, pedunculo reflexili ramosissimo.

Müll. an. inf. p. 328. t. 46. f. 7—9.

VORTICELLA composita, floribus concatenatis, stirpe paniculata subdigitata.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1317.

BRACHIONUS vegetans, stirpe retortili umbellata, radiis racemosis, corpusculis campanulatis.

Pall. Zooph. 56.

VORTICELLA polypina:

Müll. hist. verm. 1. p. 123. n. 137.

Mirari jure possint in operibus naturæ minutioribus parum versati, non inter vegetabilia referri quod in tabula proponitur, sed inter animalia. In fere innumeris aquarum incolis quos ope microscopii detexerunt hodierni physici, pulchriores pauci sunt, aut digniores qui penitus examinentur, quam quos

quos continet *Vorticellarum* genus: quod modo vendi, et prolem propagandi, polypis seu hydris admodum est affine: adeo ut a multis microscopicis scriptoribus nomine vocatum sit *polypi racemati*. Sunt enim variæ species quæ fere unitæ et connexæ videntur, plurimis confertis et parvo spatio coarctatis; sunt etiam quæ crescunt et panduntur veluti in racemi similitudinem.

Reperiuntur, ut plurimum, Vorticellæ mensibus æstivis, in aquis purioribus stagnantibus, adhærentes caulibus foliisque plantarum minorum; præcipue autem lemnæ vulgaris. Quam vero jam describimus marina est species, quæ simili modo crescit super fucis minoribus. Tota congeries nudo oculo inspecta videtur quasi macula quædam albicans, viscido-mucosa: nec patet ejus forma mira et peculiaris, donec in aquæ guttula immerfa vitroque imposita examen microscopii subierit. Ab unico caule prodeunt incertis intervallis ramuli minores, singulo quasi in florem pulcherrimum desinente convolvulo non absimilem, lateraque habentem adversa filamentis duobus instructa, more staminum. Habet omnis coacervatio pelluciditatem vitri purissimi; floresque animati nunc se contrahentes, nunc dilatantes, motu quaquaversum variato, adeo delectant oculos, ut vix aliud magis quod ope microscopii spectatur. Singulum animalculum, licet stipes omnibus in commune sit, integrum tamen est et sui juris; cumque plene adoleverit, possit se a patrio solo dissociare, et novam coloniam alio deducere.

Prædantur Vorticellæ animalcula se minora, quæ prope natantia arripiunt ingurgitantque, simul atque in vorticem contorserint aquas gyratis tentaculis.



A. 1.

THE
ARBORESCENT VORTICELLA.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Body contractile, naked ; furnished with rotatory organs.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

Compound bell-shaped VORTICELLA, with retortile branched stem.

Paniculated fea VORTICELLA.

Tree or Arborefcnt VORTICELLA.

To thofe who are not particularly converfant in the hiftory of the minuter productions of Nature it muft doubtlefs be matter of furprife to be informed that the figures on the annexed plate are not the representations of a vegetable but of an animal.

Amongft the innumerable inhabitants of the waters, which the microfcope has enabled modern naturalifts to difcover, few are more ftrikingly curious than thofe which conftitute the genus *Vorticella*. Thefe animals, in their general mode of life, their manner of production, and other circumftances, bear a great affinity to the Hydræ or Polypes ; and indeed by many microfcopical writers have been called by the

the title of Cluster-Polypes; many of the species being found in groupes; sometimes formed by the mere approximation of several individuals; and at other times by the ramified or aggregate manner in which they grow.

The Vorticellæ are generally found in clear stagnant waters, during the summer months; attached to the stalks of the smaller water-plants; and particularly to those of the common Lemna or duckweed. The species however here represented is a marine one, and is attached in a similar manner to the stalks of the smaller Fuci. To the naked eye the whole groupe bears the appearance of a very small whitish spot or slime, resembling mouldiness; but when placed in a drop of water on a glass, and examined by the microscope, its extraordinary structure is immediately displayed. From a single stem proceed, at various heights, smaller ramifications, each terminated by a seeming flower, like that of *Convolvulus*, and furnished on the opposite edges with a pair of filaments resembling stamina. The whole is in the highest degree transparent, and perfectly resembles the finest glass; while the varying motions of the seeming flowers, expanding and contracting occasionally, and turning themselves in different directions, afford a scene so singularly curious that it may be numbered amongst the most pleasing spectacles which the microscope is capable of exhibiting. Each animal, though seated on the common stem, is to be considered as complete in itself, and possesses the power, when fully grown, of detaching itself from the parent stem, affixing
itself

itself in some other spot, and forming a new colony. The Vorticellæ feed on animalcules still smaller than themselves; and their various motions are commonly exerted in order to obtain their prey, the rotatory motion of their tentacula causing an eddy in the neighbourhood of each individual sufficient to attract into its vortex the animalcules which happen to swim near, and which the Vorticellæ seize, by suddenly contracting, and inclosing them.